

10-24-1880

Letter from Anne Whitney, Belmont,
Massachusetts, to Maria Weston Chapman,
Weymouth, Massachusetts, 1880 October 24

Anne Whitney

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earlier times of my acquaintance
with her she called me her daughter
or rather she wished I had been her
child. Under all my friendship for
her the deepest desire was to be
a child to her - to supply that want.
But her high spirit of independence
repulsed all help that seemed
to involve any loss to the helper.
Any care on the other's part. I felt
sometimes checked & thwarted hardly
knowing why. A little pained some-
times. But we were getting to know
each other better. To return under
her auspices to the first pleasant
& sweet relation at least I think so.

When you came - you know
how it was - I was filled over-
flowing with the rich measure of
your friendship. I was so much
with you - in you I mean. & you
seemed to me & kept for the so much
more intimate personal affection to
be all one - all you great & good
true & just human benefactors & I
loved you more because of her & her love
of you - & all the rest because of you
both. Next Wednesday - you come.
Dearest Maria W. C.

F18807

Belmont Sunday - Oct 24 -
I am so more than glad that
you are coming so soon! that
you are able to come! - Then we
shall have so much to talk
about! As yet I cannot write
about this friend who has just
gone. I was not simply "drawn
down" - I loved & love her. She
with her beautiful dead face with its
serene & solemn dignity seemed
to consent to & show to me again
all the good the 4 years of
your friendship had been to me.
I do not yet quite understand
it all - nor how there should have
been any falling off (as I believe
there was) from the first glad
enthusiastic welcome of her heart
to me - & which made I am sure
her life happier - as it did mine
for the first two years. I think
it was partly due to a certain
difference in our natures - She

Called it - a diff^{er} of aim
which had my conclusion
convicted me of it - would have
been a noble Don't. But I
should state it thus. She
was by nature an ascetic - had
she been indignant of all the
glory of this world she would
have preferred a plain home
its privations. She not only
did not want luxury for herself
she had a contempt - at least a
dislike for what she thought
a leaning towards it - in others
My own idea is that neither
in privation nor in what some
might call self-indulgence is
there necessary virtue or weakness
what way I live & accomplish
the work given me is the
problem. In other words, what
way I live I give most to
others - I cannot judge her
or for her as I have heard some
do. That horizon of self-denial

not to say, really what she meant -

(so called) was perhaps the best
thing she gave - ^{or held to} better than books.
It was a lesson to the really
self & basely self-indulgent - who
lavished all upon themselves &
forgot that the world had any
claims upon them. It was so
far below her height - in this
respect - she may well have
felt it - like a diff^{er} in aim -
& yet had I done as she - should
I do now as she did - it would
be to cramp & benumb myself
on my only efficient - Deceit.
Still I have a great deal to learn
& lay to heart - from her as from
you - You ^{& she} are alike in more
ways than you are aware. You
were both taught in the same
great school - & your natures
were alike capable of that
teaching. I did not love you
alike nor even equally. In the

L. M. Child
[death of]

[1880]



Mrs. M. W. Chapman
Weymouth
Mass.